



*Many Voices Working for the Community*

## **Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board**

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### **DOE Advisory Board Provides a Vehicle for Lab Employee To Serve Community**

UT-Battelle employee Lance Mezga has served on the Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board since 2005, and in recent months his position at the lab and his passion for volunteer work have dovetailed nicely.



*Lance Mezga is the program manager of the Excess Facilities D&D Program and for Environmental Integration for New Facilities Development at ORNL and is in his sixth year as a member of the Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board.*

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act work at ORNL over the past year and a half has provided Lance with an opportunity to serve a valuable role on the board by allowing him to offer insights into environmental cleanup efforts at the lab. Lance is responsible for the decontamination and decommissioning of Office of Science buildings, ensuring environmental integration across all construction projects.

"When I took on my current position, I felt like I could provide a level of expertise to the SSAB in understanding the functions and workings of the construction and technical scope," he says. "It was an opportunity to provide something to the community which fit perfectly with my technical background.

"Since I've been on the board I think we've improved the technical knowledge of the members by instituting a number of training programs to get everyone on a common level of understanding. We've worked very hard

to engage all of the members. Everyone needs to participate, and everyone's opinion is important and valid.

“With the economic stimulus package that’s been implemented, the board has had an opportunity to provide comment and input to planning and how dollars are used.”

The SSAB is an independent, federally appointed citizens’ panel that provides advice and recommendations to the U.S. Department of Energy on its Oak Ridge Environmental Management Program.

Lance stepped into a leadership position on the board within weeks of his appointment in June 2005 when he was elected chair of the board’s Environmental Management Committee following the board’s August planning retreat. After just one year he was elected chair of the board.

While it might appear unusual that a new member would be put in a leadership role right away, it was obvious to all the board members that Lance was perfectly suited for the tasks by virtue of his qualifications and experience.

A native of the Cleveland, Ohio area, Lance earned bachelor’s and master’s degrees in groundwater geology from Kent State University. Upon graduation he went to work for an engineering firm in western Pennsylvania that did environmental reclamation of strip mines and underground coal mines. He returned to the Cleveland area to work for an architectural engineering firm involved in the environmental field.

In 1979 he came to ORNL to head the Geothermal and Biomass Energy Environmental Impact Assessment Program. He went on to head DOE’s Low-Level Waste Technology Development Program and set up Martin Marietta’s radiologic waste management organization to standardize procedures in Oak Ridge, Portsmouth, and Paducah.

In the late 1990s, he moved over to the K-25 site to run Lockheed Martin’s central waste management organization and later the mixed- and low-level waste programs. He also worked to develop the first integrated burn plan for the Toxic Substances Control Act Incinerator, coordinating shipments from other DOE sites.

When Bechtel Jacobs Company became DOE’s prime contractor for environmental cleanup of the Oak Ridge Reservation, Lance returned to the lab to work with the Office of Science waste management program.

In addition to his work on the board, Lance is also active as a member of the board of directors of the Waste Management Symposium. He’s been a member of the symposium’s Program Advisory Committee for 20 years and has been chair of the Low-Level/Mixed Low-Level Waste Treatment Committee for the last 10 years.

Lance also served as Vice Chair and Secretary of the Decontamination and Decommissioning Working Group for the Energy Facility Contractors Operating Group, which is composed of all the contractors at DOE facilities.

He has served as a technical expert of the International Atomic Energy Agency, the Organization for Economic and Community Development, and the Nuclear Energy Agency on low-level waste issues.

Lance and wife Ernestine live in Knoxville and have two grown daughters, Leah and Sarah.

The Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board meets the second Wednesday of each month at 6 p.m. at the DOE Information Center in Oak Ridge. For information see [www.oakridge.doe.gov/em/ssab](http://www.oakridge.doe.gov/em/ssab).

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